

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL TORONTO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4689
INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TORONTO 2320

OTTAWA PLS POUCH WINNIPEG

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, CA
SUBJECT: ONTARIO PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS

1. A WELL-INFORMED SOURCE CLOSE TO ONTARIO PREMIER WILLIAM DAVIS
TOLD ME TODAY THAT THE PREMIER HAS JUST ABOUT DECIDED UPON AN
ELECTION BEFORE JUNE 1977. HE SAID THAT AS OF THIS MOMENT THE
PREMIER WAS ABOUT 80 PERCENT CERTAIN THAT AN ELECTION WOULD BE
CALLED BUT
IS UNSURE OF THE SENARIO.

2. DAVIS FEELS THIS A PROPITIOUS MOMENT TO CALL AN ELECTION BECAUSE
HE FEELS THE PROGRESSIVE AND CONSERVATIVES ARE AT PEAK STRENGTH AND
IN FACT MAY HAVE REACHED A PLATEAU. HE ALSO FEELS THE LIBERAL
AND NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTIES ARE IN STRUCTURAL, FINANCIAL AND POPULAR
DISARRAY AND THAT NEXT YEAR WILL BE THE TIME FOR ELECTIONS.

3. MY INFORMANT FEELS THE ISSUES WILL BE JOBS AND FARM LEGISLATION.
IN FACT, THE REAL PROBLEM IN TIMING FOR THE ELECTION SEEEMS
TO BE AN ABSENCE OF GUT ISSUES UPON WHICH TO FRAME AN APPEAL
TO THE VOTERS.

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4. THE P.C. SENARIO, WHICH IS ONLY THE VAGUEST OF AN OUTLINE,
IS AS FOLLOWS:

- A. THE ONTARIO PARLIAMENT TERMINATES DECEMBER 16,
- B. THE PREMIER WILL CONVOKE A NEW PARLIAMENT IN VERY EARLY
MARCH 1977 BEGINNING WITH THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE.
- C. THE GOVERNMENT WILL INTRODUCE A CONTROVERSIAL PIECE

OF FARM LEGISLATION THAT IT EXPECTS WILL PRECIPITATE A VOTE
OF NO CONFIDENCE BY RAISING THE HACKLES OF THE NDP.

D. FAILING A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE, THE GOVERNMENT WILL,
ASSUMING THE FARM LEGISLATION IS DEFERATED OR SUSPENDED, WILL
CLAIM IT CANNOT "GET ON WITH THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT"
BECAUSE OF ITS MINORITY STATUS AND, IN A PUBLIC SHOW OF FRUSTRATION,
CALL FOR NEW ELECTIONS HOPEFULLY TO RETURN THE PCS IN A MAJORITY
POSITION.

5. DAVIS MUST PREFER A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE BECAUSE THE
ELECTORATE WILL NOT WANT NOR WILL BE READY FOR AN ELECTION AT
THAT TIME. THE PCS WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO SHIFT WHATEVER
BLAME THERE IS FOR THE ELECTION ON THE NDPS OR LIBERALS TO TAKE
THE CURSE OFF THE PC AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
DIGGINS

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